



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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\*\*\*GUEST EDITORIAL\*\*\*

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## Education in Wisconsin is at a crossroads

*State superintendent's 2007-09 budget maps direction for Wisconsin's educational future*

*By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster*

On Sept. 21 in our State Capitol, I reported to the citizens of Wisconsin on the state of public education. We have a long tradition of quality public education, from the establishment of our country's first kindergarten over 150 years ago, to nation-leading performance on college admission tests *this* year.

However, increased costs, increased poverty, and, most of all, revenue caps are threatening quality education in Wisconsin. School districts throughout our state are less able to meet the 20 standards established in state law to provide equity in educational opportunity. School districts are increasing class sizes, laying off teachers and support staff, and reducing course offerings and extracurricular activities. Education in Wisconsin is being compromised. Increasingly, it does matter where you live in our state as to the educational opportunities your child receives.

We are at a crossroads. To build on our successes and truly ensure educational opportunity for every child, I have submitted my 2007-09 budget with proposals to support our New Wisconsin Promise to ensure a quality education for every child.

My education budget maintains the state's commitment to fund two-thirds of school costs, protecting local property taxpayers. It continues and enhances my Advancing Rural Wisconsin initiative to support our rural schools with increased funding and resources. It targets funds toward global literacy and career skills. It focuses new ideas in Milwaukee and strengthens our Student Achievement Guarantee in Education and Preschool to Grade 5 class-size reduction programs. It makes additional investments in our students with special needs and the growing population with limited-English proficiency. It enhances

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our vital public library network. It builds on our statewide quality teacher and early childhood education efforts and makes investments in nutrition and after-school programs.

Additionally, I issue a call to action and service to nationally board certified teachers and Wisconsin Master Educators. I am asking these experienced educators to teach in our high-needs schools, especially in Milwaukee and small, rural communities. Under my budget proposal, those meeting the challenge would receive an additional \$5,000 for nine years for providing this vital service for the public good.

We must move public education forward into the 21st century. My budget proposal works to lessen the threat to equity in educational opportunities for students across our state and ensures continued high-quality public education that will contribute to our economic security in an increasingly competitive global economy. Together we can make our schools work for all children, wherever they may live in our great state. There is no better investment we can make than in the education of our children.

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*Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.*

**NOTES:** The state superintendent's new photo is available for download on the web. A high-resolution photo is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/eis/vm-media.html> >. Additional information about the state superintendent's 2007-09 budget is available at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/pb/index.html> >.

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